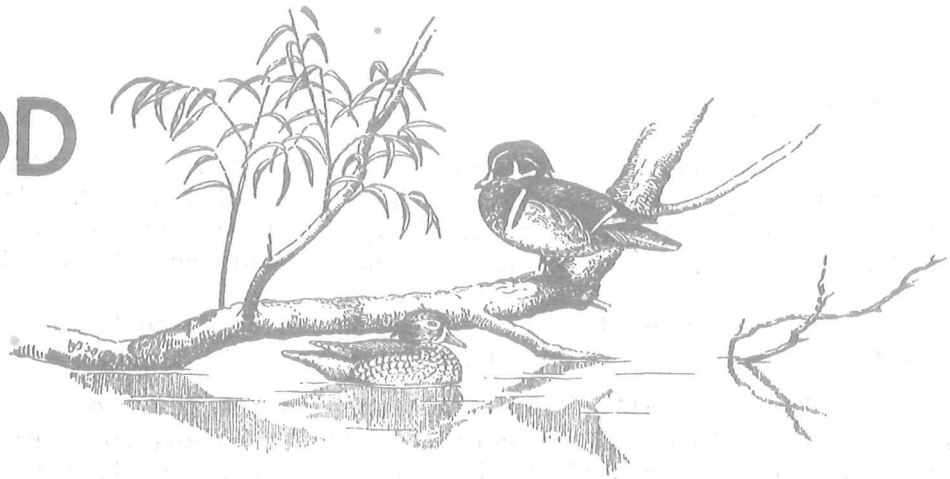
The WOOD DUCK



HAMILTON NATURALISTS' CLUB
MAIN POST OFFICE BOX 384 - HAMILTON - ONTARIO

VOL. 18, NO. 8 APRIL 1965

Southern Ontario -

NOW THAT APRIL'S HERE!

Marsh Marigold, the first Violets, Bloodroot, Hepatica, Trailing Arbutus, Early Saxifrage, Trilliums, Dogtooth Violets; migrating Birds; Spring Peepers; bloom on the Maples (Acer rubrum, the native red, among the first and beautiful against the blue April sky). In the animal kingdom, the birth month for Chipmunks, Muskrats, Fawns, Skunks, Gray Squirrels, Raccoons, with emergence from the dens being May for the baby chipmunks; muskrat in late May; gray squirrels remain in the nest until June; young skunks stay in the den until late May, and the raccoon kits do not forage with their mothers until late June. Life in the bog is evidenced with shoots of cattail and iris - snakes are there but like the newly-emerged turtles, somewhat sluggish. Pickerel frogs trill in the twilight and toads sing in a shrill, high-pitched mating trill. Trips to Spooky Hollow - a hike along the Bruce Trail - or visits to a section particularly to your liking - NOW THAT APRIL'S HERE!

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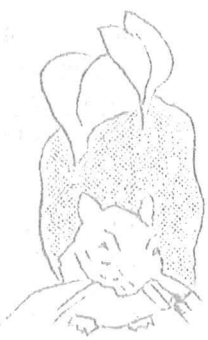

THE CALL OF THE WILD GEESE

On Friday, March Twelfth, while enjoying my breakfast coffee, shortly after 8:00 A.M., it was a pleasant start to my day to hear the announcement by Paul Hanover on Radio Station C.H.M.L., Hamilton - "a man had 'phoned to announce that two large flights of geese had just passed over the mountain brow!".

My mind recalled the article which appeared two years ago in the Orillia "Packet and Times" - reproduced herewith in part:

"Their gabbling honk had caught at the heart of this city dweller perhaps conjuring up a vision of far northern lakes pale and cold; of silent evergreen forests still wearing their mantle of snow. And yet that wild, ethereal honking heralded the return of the noble geese following their immemorial course from south to north with the first warmth of approaching spring.

There is a message for all of us in that call. It is a reminder of man's true place in the scheme of things, and of the infinite and mysterious world in which he moves. In this age of nuclear power, of jet propulsion, of space satellites and moon rockets, we tend to forget our vast ignorance of the motivations and methods which regulate life on this planet, in our strivings to reach another.

What compass steers the migrating flocks on their vast journeys across the skies of the world? What unerring instinct brings the familiar robin back each spring to the same homely nest beside the kitchen door?

To know the answer to these, and to countless other mysteries with which nature achieves its ends, is to comprehend the secret of life itself. Armed with the science of a thousand generations, and prompted by an inquisitive brain, man has solved some of nature's riddles and turned them to his own advantage. But in relation to the vast realm of the unknown all about him, the area of the known is small indeed. In an age when man seems to have developed a somewhat overblown concept of himself and his powers, it is well for us to remember our relative insignificance in the world and the universe.

Chances are, in the next few weeks, you'll hear, far above you, the breath-taking sound of distant honking borne on the wings of the wind. It is a sound as old as time itself; it is the very voice of Nature, the eternal Call of the Wild."

M.S.S.

CONSERVATION

As a Member of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club, you are urged to lend your support in any manner possible - mentally, physically, monetarily - not waiting until the opportunity presents itself but NOW.

Anyone who was present at the March 8th General Meeting could not help but be impressed with the urgency of a concerted effort in bringing about a conservation plan for Hamilton and District with the co-operative efforts of Provincial and Local Governments, Chambers of Commerce, Farm groups and organized naturalists.

The old cliche "charity begins at home" most certainly applies to our area - the TIME IS NOW - THE NEED IS VITAL - and everyone must give thought and action to bring this to reality.

Haphazard planning is no good at all. Planning which embraces all concepts of conservation is what we need and MUST HAVE!

Report of Audubon Wildlife Tour of March 11, 1965

"Land That I Love" - produced by Mr. Eben McMillan gave a glimpse of America in its virgin state before the advent of settlers, showing wildlife living in perfect balance, using the earth for sustenance, without violating the laws of nature. Buffalo roamed in large herds, grazing off the land, but moving to new pastures, allowing the old to reproduce itself. Each strata of wildlife lived side by side, eachto its own environment, the weak succumbing to the predators so that only the strong and healthy remained. The Indians were a natural part of the land, only using what they needed.

Settlers arrived to discover this lush state of perfection and claimed it for their own. Wildlife had to go to make room for herds of domestic animals, cattle and sheep. Overgrazing resulted, the precious topsoil was blown away with the wind, and swept down to the sea with unrestrained flood waters. Soon the cattle had to be fed with imported hay, for the unproductive land could no longer sustain life. Nothing remained to trap moisture. And now comes the warning that this can happen here in Canada. It has happened here, perhaps on a lesser scale, but the process of denudation continues inexorably.

The Spencer Creek Conservation Authority owes its existence to "Hurricane Hazel", when the need for river control and reforestation was recognized. We hope that through its efforts "The Land That We Love" can be saved.

A.B.

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Spencer Creek Conservation Authority

All Naturalists in the Hamilton area are interested, or should be, in the work of this Authority. At the March general meeting of our Club, the members had the privilege of hearing Allen Ward tell of the Authority plans.

Their first aim is to reclaim land denuded of trees by the first settlers in this area. They hope to achieve part of this by planting 20,000 trees this Spring.

Historic relics will be preserved - old mills and dams reminiscent of once prosperous settlements. A log cabin has already been restored at Valens.

Efforts are being made to purchase parcels of Beverly Swamp, the soil of the swamp being mainly peat, it has the valuable property of maintaing the water level but the peat is unsuitable for farming as it oxidizes after five or six years' use.

Cold streams flowing through the Beverly are excellent for trout and other fish. Water from a dam being built at Valens to form a 150-acre lake will flow into the swamp. The engineers for the project have devised a system by which the cool water from the bottom of the lake will enter streams, as the warm water at the top, with its lowered oxygen content would not sustain fish life.

A film of a conservation project in Ohio was shown and it demonstrated what can be accomplished by a group concerned about conservation, restoration of the land and recreational facilities.

The evening concluded with a question period and a number of controversial issues arose concerning the concept of "conservation".

The meeting then adjourned for refreshments and further discussion ensued. It was a very interesting programme and while fairly well attended, it is too bad that a much larger number of Members did not avail themselves of the opportunity to be on hand and hear about this Authority in our area.

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CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

At the present time the Hamilton City Council is considering whether Hamilton should take part in Conservation Authority work. Every citizen has a stake in this decision. Every citizen is vitally concerned with conservation, which has been described as the wise management of our natural resources: soil, woods, water, and wildlife.

Conservation Authorities have the responsibility to envision the resource needs of present and future communities, and the duty to set about the task of their conservation. Authority projects must first do a job for Conservation, and secondly they can provide that useful by-product, outdoor recreation for the public. There must be a compromise, however, between those who advocate the preservation intact of all the natural landscape, and those who favour the use of every square inch of available land for all forms of recreation. The needs of all segments of the population must be considered.

Since 1946, the Ontario Government has established 32 Conservation Authorities, and together they cover almost 22,000 square miles. Each Authority has jurisdiction over a river valley or watershed. Municipalities in the watershed (cities, towns, townships) appoint a representative to the Authority. We might define an Authority, then, as an organization of municipalities - a corporate entity - operating under the Conservation Authorities Act of Ontario - for the purpose of undertaking conservation projects. These projects usually take the form of multi-purpose Conservation Areas - for example, a dam might be built on a river to create a reservoir, thus controlling flood waters, and improving down-stream flow in dry summer months. The lands surrounding the reservoir may be developed for outdoor recreation for the public - swimming, picnicking, fishing, and walking trails; and Authority forests and nature sanctuaries can be created.

How is an Authority financed?

Grants are made by the Ontario Government to most types of conservation schemes, except maintenance. All Capital Expenses (such as land, buildings, dams) and Administration Costs receive a 50% grant. The Authority's share (the other 50%) is levied against the member municipalities on a per capita basis. At the present time, the Government has raised its subsidy on small dams and reservoir schemes to 75% of their cost, and allows the 25% municipal share to be deferred for three years. They have done this because of the falling water tables in Southern Ontario and the drought in 1963, and this subsidy is having the desired effect of encouraging this type of water control project all across the Province.

The Government appoints a full-time Field Officer, a professional conservationist, to direct and co-ordinate the work of an Authority, and the Government pays his salary, while the Authority is required to pay only his expenses.

It is obvious that these grants are a generous system to encourage municipalities to undertake conservation work. The grants are plainly "tax money" which the Ontario Government is giving back to the municipalities to be ploughed back into local areas for the benefit of citizens. Other areas are taking advantage of these grants, and it is high time that the Hamilton area began to secure its share of these benefits.

Spencer Creek Conservation Authority

Hamilton is surrounded by Conservation Authorities - Halton Region Conservation Authority, Spencer Creek Conservation Authority, Grand Valley Conservation Authority, and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

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CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES (continued from previous page) -

The Spencer Authority is northwest of Hamilton, covering about 100 square miles in Wentworth County. The two most notable features of the watershed are the Niagara Escarpment and the Beverly Swamp. This is the headwater swamp of the Spencer Creek and Authorities are expected to purchase and protect such areas. This is the most important area for wildlife in the watershed, and the Government has recommended that it be retained in its natural state. The Spencer Authority has bought 50 acres here - out of a recommended 1700 acres. In the past seven years, the Spencer Authority has spent some $130,000, and a large portion of this has been used to purchase 360 acres at Valens where it is proposed to build a dam and create a reservoir.

The Spencer Authority is endeavouring to lease the Dundas P.Y.C. reservoir near Greensville. Nearby are the historic ruins of the Darnley Mill built in 1813.

Webster's Falls is probably the best-known landmark on Spencer Creek. The park at the Falls is owned by the Town of Dundas, and is the only public recreation area in the watershed.

The Spencer is a small Authority. With a small population of 24,000, they have not enough per capita assessment to call upon - they have always been hampered by their small size and consequent lack of funds; and sometimes a small organization is not economic. Finally, last fall, the Spencer Authority presented a Brief to the City of Hamilton which, in effect, invited Hamilton to join the Spencer Creek Conservation Authority.

Spencer Creek Conservation Area Brief

The general policy of Conservation Authorities in Ontario is a complete plan of conservation projects such as water control, soil and erosion control, reforestation, and development of outdoor recreation facilities. The S.C.C.A. Brief indicates their approval of all these benefits, but verbal statements indicate that it is the policy of the S.C.C.A. to buy land for reservoirs and water control projects, and not develop this land for recreation UNTIL they are forced to do so. In support of this theory, the Brief states on page 21: "Immediate recreational development of these projects is not critical.". This statement is misleading, because the Technical Report prepared by the Government for the Spencer Authority states under "Recreation", page 1: "There is perhaps no other part of Canada where the need for recreational facilities is as great as in Southern Ontario", and further states that this need is particularly pronounced around the western sections of Lake Ontario."

Thousands of Hamilton citizens need, and demand, the open areas and green places for such outdoor recreations as swimming, picnicking, skating, and nature trails. Well-planned recreational development in Conservation Areas could provide these facilities within reasonable distance of Hamilton.

This is a matter of policy, and policy can usually be guided satisfactorily by means of adequate voting power, which brings us to a discussion of Representation.

The S.C.C.A. Brief proposed that Hamilton would have 5 members (i.e. 5 votes) in a 15-member Authority. The other ten members would be the present Spencer Authority consisting of the Town of Dundas, and the Townships of Ancaster, West Flamboro, Beverly, Puslinch and East Flamboro, plus three Ontario representatives.

The Brief indicated Hamilton's population as 266,000, and the population of the

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CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES (continued from previous page) -

present Spencer watershed as 24,000. In other words, Hamilton has 90% of the population of the combined areas.

The Brief suggested a proposed annual budget of $100,000, of which Hamilton would pay as its annual share, $90,000.

To one who is conversant with Conservation Authority work, it was evident that Hamilton with 90% of the population was being asked to pay 90% of the costs, and was being offered only about 33% representation! Obviously this could not be justified to the citizens of Hamilton, as the City was being asked to assume the major financial role without adequate representation.

City of Hamilton

As the only Hamilton citizen who has been actively interested in the Spencer Authority since its establishment in 1958, I felt some responsibility to Hamilton and its citizens. Consequently, it seemed essential to alert members of City Council, pointing out the inadequacies in the Brief, how they could be adjusted, and urging Council to secure advice and assistance from the Conservation Authorities Branch in Toronto. As a result, Board of Control has now set up a special committee to thoroughly investigate the entire situation. Following its contacts with the Conservation Authorities Branch, the committee will present its findings and recommendations to City Council. In general, City Council seems anxious that Hamilton shall meet its responsibilities in the field of conservation, but Hamilton must be assured of adequate representation before the City can assume its appropriate role in Conservation Authority work.

Wentworth Region Conservation Authority

Instead of Hamilton joining the present Spencer Authority, I propose that a new Authority be established which can set its own traditions for progress and become as active as other Authorities in the Province. This new Authority will need a new name - and I suggest - WENTWORTH REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY.

As I envision Wentworth Region Conservation Authority, Hamilton and some of the Spencer Creek municipalities would be members: City of Hamilton, Town of Dundas, Townships of Ancaster, West Flamboro and Beverly.

It is my understanding that an amendment is soon to come before the Ontario Legislature which will give municipalities having a population of 250,000 or more, ten representatives on an Authority. This would help to give Hamilton adequate representation.

Only very small portions of Puslinch Township and East Flamboro Township are in the Spencer watershed, and each of these small areas has a population of only 380 living in the watershed. Both Puslinch and East Flamboro are involved in other Conservation Authorities, and it would aid in proper re-organization if both Puslinch and East Flamboro were withdrawn from the proposed new Authority. This suggested change is possible under the Act. (By way of comparison, the Puslinch member would represent 380 people, the East Flamboro member would represent 380 people, while a Hamilton member would represent 26,600 people.)

It would be a great step forward if Hamilton decided to petition the Ontario

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CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES (continued from previous page) -

Government to establish the Wentworth Region Conservation Authority. Then, with an efficient organization to handle the work, we could take our place with other Conservation Authorities in Ontario who are helping to achieve for our citizens, the enduring benefits of true conservation.

Edith M. Lloyd
47 Bond Street North
Hamilton, Ontario

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT - We are sure that Members of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club will have read Mrs. Lloyd's submission with deep interest. We are grateful to her for clarification of some of the points which puzzled and mystified us in regard to Conservation Authorities. As our lead-in indicates - there is much food for thought and it is our earnest hope that this will result in our Membership at large THINKING profoundly about these matters. As we stated elsewhere in this edition of The Wood Duck - THE TIME IS NOW!

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Events in APRIL -

Monday, April 12, 1965 - General Meeting - Y.M.C.A., 79 James Street South, Hamilton, Ontario - 8:00 P.M.

"FERNS" - Mrs. Edith M. Lloyd

(Mrs. Lloyd is a Life Member of our society - she knows her subject well and the Members will thoroughly enjoy her talk on these native plants)

Visitors welcome — Refreshments will be served

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Sunday, April 11 - Motor Trip to Oak Orchard Swamp for Canada Geese - meet Main and Ottawa Sts. at 7.00 A.M. - Leader: George W. North - Jackson 2-6082

April 23-25 (inclusive)- Annual Meeting of Federation of Ontario Naturalists at Kingston, Ontario

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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO MEMBERS:

We had hoped to present a slate of Directors for the 1965-66 Season to the Members in this issue of the Wood Duck. However, at press time, the slate is incomplete. Mr. Robert Curry, 1126 - #2 Highway, Ancaster - 'phone 648-2671 is Chairman of the Nominating Committee. Members are urged to communicate with Mr. Curry, giving him the name or names of any members in good standing, whom they would like to nominate. This will give the Committee time for consideration and acceptance or non-acceptance, and the proposed slate of Directors will then appear in the May issue in time for the General Meeting when the Slate will be proposed from the floor.

Presented herewith is Part II of Miller Stewart's script of radio programme The Learning Stage from Station CJBC, Toronto (Part I having appeared in the March 1965 issue of The Wood Duck:

The Expedition Naturalists of Canada

When we got to our halfway mark in the story of the expedition naturalists we had heard of the great tragedy of the loss of Sir John Franklin's expedition of 140 men in 1825. We left Sir John Richardson still searching, 35 years later, for the cause of Franklin's disappearance. One of the results of the Franklin disaster was that it proved to be the excuse or incentive for some 40 expeditions combing the Arctic and Subarctic as no other "empty" territory had been searched before. These parties, most of which were Royal Navy personnel, traced down evidence that accounted for some 40 of the lost men, but there has been no solid evidence of what happened - nothing that I know of explained the whole tragedy.

However, the activities of all these parties added up to a tremendous increase in knowledge of the North - its geology, its flora and fauna, and its people. The search also developed the techniques of Arctic travel to the point where it became safe, if not quite comfortable. And after that, the North was never again tackled with the headstrong incompetence of the Franklin affair.

This created the very strange anomaly that about 100 years ago much more was known about the bleak Canadian Arctic than was known about our fertile Canadian prairies--particularly the Southern section of that highly productive area. As late as 1870 Captain William Butler, who had been sent out west with a party, reported that Southern Saskatchewan was empty of people. Remember, this was after the first Red River uprising. No wonder Butler called the book he wrote about his trip "The Great Lone Land".

I think I should explain here that the West had, of course, been traversed many times by explorers and fur company officials, but almost always via the north branch of the Saskatchewan River or by the paths such as the Carlton Trail which crossed this country well to the north of the boundary. Indeed, the only white party that I can think of at the moment that ever crossed the plains below the 52nd or 53rd degree of longitude was a party of disgruntled Red River settlers who forsook Fort Garry for Oregon under the leadership of that remarkable half-breed guide, James Sinclair - about mid-century, 1848 to be precise. As far as the fur companies were concerned, this country, as we have said before, interested them only as a source of pemmican and buffalo robes. This was not fur country, and they maintained no permanent posts in the south.

The governments of both the U.S. and Great Britain showed so little interest in this territory that the boundary between the Rockies and the Red River was marked by one oaken post near an abandoned H.B.C. temporary factory at Pembina. Some joker had seen fit to turn this post around so that it had the initials G.B. for Great Britain on its south face, with U.S. to the north.

A party that was sent specifically to explore and report upon the prairie West was the Palliser Expedition of 1857-1860. The administrative and scientific personnel of this party was recruited in the Old Country. The leader of the group, which had the backing of the Royal Geographical Society, was a well-to-do Irish traveller and sportman who had travelled in the American West and had been struck by the almost complete dearth of information on the British North American West. His medical officer was a 23-year-old Scot, James Hector - later Sir James Hector, the great New Zealand geologist. He was topograpner and naturalist, as well as doctor.

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The Expedition Naturalists of Canada (continued from previous page) -

Their botanist was one Eugene Bourgeau, a one-time French shepherd who had won the reputation of being "the prince of botanical collectors" with an incredible self-taught grasp of plant life, particularly in the Alps. There was some misgiving about taking him, but Sir William Hooker of Kew insisted that so great a collector could not help but be a congenial companion. And so it turned out. He was not only a most energetic and excellent companion, he was an indefatigable worker, and such an enthusiast that he made botanists of everybody in the party. He was so shocking a horseman that they finally gave up on trying to teach him to ride, and he did all his travelling by cart or dog sled. He got along famously with everybody, even that prickly character, Thomas Blakiston, the magnetic observer, who had served earlier in Canada under Sir John Iefroy. Blakiston had travelled in the Northwest before Iefroy set up the Toronto Meteorological Observatory on its present site on Bloor Street in 1842.

The assignment of the Palliser party was:
1). to study a route for a road from Lake Superior to Red River.
2). to map the routes that crossed the prairies
3). to locate passes in the Rockies and file information on all country traversed.

All of these purposes were thoroughly fulfilled over a three-year period.

You have to see on a map the route that this party covered to realize what a thorough job they did. Perhaps their greatest achievement was covering so much territory without ever getting into any serious trouble with such warlike Indians as the Sioux, Blackfeet, Piegans, and other prairie tribes. Hector and Palliser in particular were superb diplomats - firm and resolute, yet understanding, open-minded and patient.

Palliser noted the complete absence of a system of law and order over this entire vast territory. In a confidential letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Palliser urged that some form of government be considered with the special problems of Indian and half-breed trader relations in mind. I personally don't think it is any coincidence that the North West Mounted Police were set up within a few years as a rural constabulary, modelled on the Irish Police. This one fact explains why Canada did not have a Wild West as in the United States. We had law and order out there in advance of settlement.

It should be pointed out here that the process of civilizing the American West was held up for almost two decades by Indian Wars. Several expeditions lost scientists to the enraged Sioux, including Dr. T. C. Henry, Dr. C. B. Kemerly and John Feilner - all highly-respected naturalists.

To get back to Palliser - unfortunately 1856-1860 happened to be three very dry years in the West. Palliser, as well as many others of that day, was seized of the widely held notion that the center of our continent had to be the mid-continental desert. Other large land masses such as Eurasia, Africa and Australia suffered from this, so, it followed, should North America. Palliser described a triangle of territory which started at the east boundary of the present Saskatchewan, had its western corner in the foothills of the Rockies, and extended as far north as Saskatoon. There is an arid patch of much smaller extent where the terrain is much better suited to ranching than to agriculture - a rough triangle with Weyburn, Saskatchewan on the east, Lethbridge, Alberta on the west, with the big bend of the South Saskatchewan River on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border as its apex, which is too dry for continuous farming. This area is only about one third the size of Palliser's original triangle. And even so, in many years this area has produced

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The Expedition Naturalists of Canada (continued from previous page) -

enormous crops when it got adequate rain. With irrigation, where water is available and with modern dry-farming techniques where it is not, this area makes farming a good gamble because the good years usually outnumber the lean ones.

There is a very good book published in the past year, called "The Palliser Expedition" by Irene Spry, published by MacMillan which gives a fine account of this early voyage of discovery in our west.

Perhaps you can appreciate how empty Western Canada was as late as 1872 when I remind you that the Boundary Survey party of that year found not one human habitation between the tiny half-breed village of St. Joseph in the Red River Valley and the Rocky Mountains within several days' journey north from the boundary.

Before I get on to the work of those boundary surveyors I think I should mention that when the boundary from the Pacific to the Kootenay country was marked in 1857, the Canadian party had a naturalist along names J. K. Lord, who published a catalogue on "The Birds of the 49th Parallel Survey". The United States party never did publish their report on this section of the Boundary, perhaps because the Civil War was breaking out at that time.

The scientific personnel of the separate boundary parties from the United States and Canada who did the actual marking of the border between 1872 and 1876 both included well-known naturalists. The medical officer and naturalist of the American group was Dr. Elliott Coues, as assistant surgeon in the army, and already a distinguished ornithologist at the time of his appointment. Coues had been drafted from his post of Professor of Zoology and comparative anatomy at Norwich University in Vermont to go on the Boundary Commission in its second year of operations - 1873. In 1872 he had published his Key to North American Birds. Afterwards he taught at Columbia, worked at the Smithsonian, and became President of the American Ornithological Union and a full-time professional authority on birds and wildlife.

The naturalist of the Canadian party, whose reputation was to add much distinction to the standing of the survey amongst naturalists was Dr. George Mercer Dawson, who finally became Director of the Geological Survey of Canada. The son of that great geologist Sir William Dawson, principal of McGill University, George Dawson was, at this time, only 22 years old. He was deformed physically and was about the size of a 12-year-old boy. In spite of his handicap he was a great hand at Wilderness travel, an unsurpassed canoe man, a first-rate horseman and an incredibly versatile scientist. Dawson City was named after him for his later geological surveys in the Yukon which led to the Klondike Gold Rush. His report on the boundary survey is a highly-prized and very rare book.

There was a difference of scientific opinion between Dawson and Coues, concerning the status of the bison or buffalo, in their reports. Coues insisted that the buffalo herds were on the increase while Dawson reported that they would all be gone within a dozen years - and unhappily Dawson was right.

There is a very interesting book that covers the activities of both the U.S. and Canadian parties, called "West on the 49th Parallel" by John E. Parson, published by William Morrow of New York in 1963.

The medical officer to this party was Dr. Thomas Millman of Toronto, who was also the botanist. He returned to practise in Toronto and left a fine botanical collection to the University of Toronto when he died in 1921. His journal of the

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The Expedition Naturalists of Canada (continued from previous page) -

the survey was published in 1928 under the title "Impressions of the West in the Early Seventies" and is a fine piece of Canadiana.

One of the most significant expeditions to Western Canada acquired its naturalist in an almost casual way. In 1872 Sandford Fleming, chief engineer of the Pacific Railway, and the secretary of that company, the Reverend George Grant, were at Thunder Bay. They were on their way to lay out the route which their transcontinental line was to take across the prairies. They encountered quite by accident a young botanist who collecting the flora of the Lake Superior Shore, and were so taken by his energy, enthusiasm and grasp of his subject that they invited him to accompany them on their mission.

His name was John Macoun, an Ulster Irishman from Belleville who was using his vacation from schoolteaching to botanize. Macoun was imbued with the idea that the best key to the value of an area was the general character of the plants that grew there. He argued, in the face of stout opposition, that the open prairies were first-class agricultural land, because the native plants that grew there showed that the soil, the climate, the seasons, were all suitable for crops. He persuaded Fleming that his railway should go straight across the southern prairies instead of following the old pathways along the rivers of the north.

He stayed in the West for four years during which he covered all the prairies from the border as far north as the Peace River and then made a botanical survey across British Columbia from the Peace River country to Victoria. In the book he wrote in 1882 called "Manitoba and the Great Northwest" he exploded the myth of the Great American Desert, and very shrewdly analyzed the potential of the prairies. He recognized that there were areas more suitable for ranching than farming, and reduced Palliser's Triangle to its present proportions. John Macoun went on many Canadian expeditions and made known as much of Canada as any man. He died in his ninetieth year in 1920, by which time his two sons had both become distinguished Canadian naturalists.

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IN MEMORIAM

It was with deep regret that we learned of the passing of Mr. Herbert E. Kettle of Hamilton - a Life Member of our Club and past President of our organization. Mr. Kettle was apparently much interested in trees and former editions of The Wood Duck contained many articles from him on this subject. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his loved ones in their loss.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS NOTICE TO MEMBERS NOTICE TO MEMBERS

You are hereby informed that the Annual Meeting of our Society will be held at the Y.M.C.A., 79 James Street South, Hamilton, Ontario, on Monday, May 10, 1965 at 8:00 P.M. A slate of officers will be presented - followed by Election of Officers for the 1965-66 season. This is Members' Night - and we urge you to be present on this occasion.

ANIMAL TOILETS

At this approach to another outdoor season, it may be of interest to call attention to the importance of the toilet in the animal economy. Parts of some animals are used solely for the purpose of cleansing and dressing the outer covering and to be aware of some of the methods employed, may assist you in observing this important function in the season ahead.

The Heron is provided with two such toilet requisites. On the breast is a powder puff consisting of short brittle feathers coated with a waxy powder. The inner edge of the claw of the middle toe on a heron's foot is serrated. When viewed under a microscope, it looks similar to a comb. A heron's food consists of fish, eels and similar edibles. These leave the feathers in a bedraggled condition and if the slime were not removed, the heron's covering might lose its qualities. Therefore, it is imperative that the heron has to perform its toilet after dining. To accomplish this, a liberal supply of powder is dabbed on the head and neck by the simple process of dipping them into the powder puff. The powder soaks up the after-dinner slime. After the powdering, the heron balances itself on one leg, stretches out its neck and combs the powder off its feathers. The bill then receives attention. Each wing is groomed in turn. Standing on one leg the heron stretches out the other and lays its wing on it. Then, with a sweeping movement, it draws the leg into its side. This is an "ironing" effect and neatly arranges the wing feathers. The final touchup is done with a few pecks of the beak.

The Bittern - who resembles the heron in the matter of diet, has a similar toilet but it possesses an even more efficient comb, consisting of 36 well-formed teeth.

Many birds enjoy a wash in clean, fresh water - and even as this is written, starlings have been observed bathing daily in the garden (late February and early March, whenever water has been available) - as well as the common house sparrow - although neither can be said to insist on absolutely fresh water. However, the enjoyment is still evident - they go into the water half-way up to their tarsi, make it spurt with their bills, flap their wings - always leaving their eyes free - but nonetheless splashing vigorously and then making their heavy flight away toward a neighbouring bush or tree, where they shake themselves and smooth the feathers which are stuck together, carefully with their bills. Washing is followed by oiling of the plumage from the little gland situated above the tail.

Some birds prefer the dust bath to the water bath - pheasants, partridge as well as other species having been observed using this method during dry weather. Others make use of ants in their toilet, deliberately placing live ants among their feathers, or sometimes rolling among ants and this practice is known as "anting". The Robins in your garden will quite frequently use this procedure.

The teeth of all healthy mammals are nearly always spotlessly clean. How is such cleanliness achieved? The answer is found in the mouth itself. Inside the cheeks and lips, and in some mammals on the side of the tongue as well, are natural toothbrushes in the form of little rubber-like excrescences. With the opening and closing of the mouth tnese sweep up and down the teeth in a cleansing motion.

Sometimes in the animal kingdom there is a degree of helpfulness. Dan McCowan, Canadian Naturalist of Rocky Mountain fame, witnessed a mule deer who when an adult varying hare emerged from among the trees and came directly to the deer and squatted close to its front hoofs, at once started to lick the hare's head and then its back and sides. It appears that the salty substances from the fur of the hare appealed to the palate of the deer and the gentle friction of the deer's tongue and the gentle friction of the deer's tongue pleased the hare.

And should you chance to be visiting a zoo..the "flea-hunting" of the monkey's

continued next page.....

ANIMAL TOILETS (continued from previous page) -

ritual - is not what you think. Actually it is not fleas that monkeys pick from each other's backs but scaly pieces of skin. The "picker" enjoys the salty taste and the "picked" experiences a pleasant sensation.

Cattle assist each other - standing face to face they lick each other's head and neck. Horses seen in summer standing head to tail, each whisking its tail ceaselessly - are endeavouring to brush the flies from the other's head and eyes. Horses groom themselves by rubbing and rolling on the ground.

Elephants indulge in both dust and water baths. First a powder of dust from their trunks - then a bath - and another powdering with dust. Elephants also like a back scratch and "rubbing trees" are prevalent near mud-holes where these creatures love to wallow.

The American Buffalo is also very fond of scratching its shoulders against trees and rocks and large boulders have been rubbed smooth as glass by buffaloes using them for scratching posts.

A badger will generally use a tree near the hole to habitually rub itself. A fox will make use of brushwood for the same purpose and thus stimulate its coat to a lovely sheen.

The tiny mice give themselves vigorous washings, licking their little forepaws again and again going over its entire body, cleaning each hind foot in turn and finishing with its tail. Rats do the same but do not include the tail.

A beaver combs its fur with its toes. The nail of the second toe on each hind foot is split and forms a comb. The toe itself is jointed and can bend in any direction. When the beaver is about to perform its toilet, one hind leg is raised, usually the left one, and the tail is brought to the front with a sweeping motion and sat upon. The discharge from the oil-glands, which the sitting posture apparently facilitates, is used to dress the fur.

Twitching muscles enable a dog to rid itself of water when its coat is soaked. Horses use this same method to shake off the dust after rolling. Moles have strongly developed twitching muscles.

Lizards, after eating a sticky meal, have been seen to rub their noses on ferns in a similar manner to a bird cleaning its bill after feeding.

Small insects too clean themselves - first the forelegs, nibbling every speck of dirt away and then the two rear legs on each side rubbed together - in the nature of a whisk broom to sweep them clean.

Ants are well equipped for performing their toilet. The legs are equipped with comb, brush, and pomade. The comb is supplied with both fine and coarse teeth and is composed of short, stiff hairs. The brush is made up of softer hairs which are hollow, and when in use they pour forth a lubricant which causes graints of dust and dirt to stick together and be easily removed. They also have a communal toilet. One ant will rub, pat and massage another, and parts of an ant's body which it cannot reach itself are cleansed by the tongue and mandibles of a fellow ant.

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FIELD EVENTS - 1965 - Please make the following changes on your green sheets -

Saturday, May 29 - Spring Bird Count - Contact - JOHN MILES - JA 2-6160
(This is a replacement)

Sunday, June 13 - Trip to Luther Swamp (date originally shown was in error)

NEW BOOKS for CLUB MEMBERS at the HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

by - Annie J. Hunt

The titles this month, are both varied and entertaining. They are Roadless Area, Downstream, Wild Lives of Africa, Lone dhow, Stalking the Blue-eyed Scallop and The Living Wilderness.

Roadless Area, by Paul Brooks, is an humorous account of trips he and his wife, Susan, made into the wilderness in the United States and in Africa, on foot or by canoe. They also explored the old canals of England. His writing ability and his interest as a conservationist have combined to produce a book nature lovers will enjoy very much. The appendix includes a list of equipment required for a hiking or canoe trip. The 67 pen-and-ink sketches by the author add to the attractiveness of these fine recorded nature observations.

In Downstream, Dr. J. E. Bardach gives the natural history of a river. This enlightening work traces the development of the river from its origins to the sea. The author is a professor in the University of Michigan's department of fisheries. This is an important book on the world of moving water for both the general reader and the specialist. It includes the life histories of many plants and animals. The last three chapters are devoted to man's use and misuse of waters. They discuss detergents, insecticides and atomic energy wastes. There is an excellent bibliography and index.

Lady Juliette Huxley has called her first book Wild Lives of Africa. In it she records the highlights of a journey with her husband Sir Julian Huxley through South, East and Central Africa to report on the wild life conservations for UNESCO. She presents a rich tapestry of the flora, fauna and ancient monuments and the natives. It is well written and easy to read. It includes many of the photographs they took while conducting this fascinating survey.

A nature book of hair-raising encounters is Lone dhow, by A. C. Doyle, younger son of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It is the story of a mission he undertook on behalf of the Natural History Museum of Geneva to capture an adult tiget shark for their collection. This true, gripping narrative is told most vividly. The photographs taken on the voyages are thrilling too.

Euell Gibbons gathers wild food as a hobby. In his earlier book Stalking the Wild Asparagus he gave information on searching out such food in the woods and fields of America. Now in Stalking the Blue-eyed Scallop he describes the fine food to be found at the seashore, such as shellfish and marine plants. Accurate line drawings, by C. R. Hammond aid the reader in identifying the sea life. In his chatty, informal descriptions he includes reliable directions for cooking. This is an informative book to consult and to read.

R. G. Montgomery is a well-known American nature-writer. His latest work The Living Wilderness contains much of the nature lore he has gathered by personal observation of the creatures of the wild during his lifetime spent in the wilderness areas of the United States. The noted wildlife artist, Campbell Grant, has contributed charming pencil sketches of the many animals whose ways of living are to aptly described in this treasury of stories for nature enthusiasts.

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Attention is called to the forthcoming activities of the FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS:

- ANNUAL MEETING - April 23-25, 1965 at Kingston, Ontario
- PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION in conjunction with the Annual Meeting - entries must be postmarked by April 10, 1965
- F.O.N. CAMP for 1965 - to be held at Red Bay on the Bruce Peninsula, July 3-17, 1965

NOTEWORTHY BIRD RECORDS

Number of species recorded to March 31, 1965 - 107

* - indicates first record for the year
F - indicates first record for the migration
NE - indicates nest with eggs

Horned Grebe	March	5	1	LaSalle Park	Robert Curry
Pied-billed Grebe	Mar.	27*	1	LaSalle Park	G. North, R. Westmore
Great Blue Heron	Mar.	28*	1	Ancaster	Robert A. H. Westmore
Whistling Swan	Mar.	21F	1	Caledonia	fide R. Westmore
	Mar.	23	17	over Dundas	Mrs.E.C.Baker, M. Watson
	Mar.	24	266	Hamilton Harbour etc.	H. Moore, G. W. North
Canada Goose	Feb.	5F	flock	over Bull's Lane	J. Harvey Williams
	Mar.	23	flocks	over Dundas	Miss Mabel Watson
Pintail	Mar.	28F	5	Willow Point	Alf Epp, E. W. Bastin
Green-winged Teal	Mar.	21*	1	Dundas Hydro Station	John B. Miles
Blue-winged Teal	Mar.	20*	8	" " "	" "
American Widgeon	Mar.	5F	4	LaSalle Park	Robert Curry
Wood Duck	Mar.	30*	1	Woodland Cemetery	George W. North
Redhead	Mar.	5F	31	LaSalle Park	Robert Curry
Ring-necked Duck	Mar.	21F	2	Longwood Road	Alf Epp
Canvasback	Mar.	5F	3	LaSalle Park	Robert Curry
Lesser Scaup	Mar.	30F	7	Woodland Cemetery	G. W. North
Hooded Merganser	Mar.13F,20		2,6	Desjardines Canal	Robt. Curry; H. Moore
Red-br. Merganser	Mar.	28F	22	N. Shore of Bay	G. North, R. Westmore
Turkey Vulture	Mar.21*,28		1,1	High Level; Campbellville	A. Epp; R. Westmore
Red-tailed Hawk	Mar.	28	N2E,N3E	Burlington	Keith Salisbury
Red-shoulder.Hawk	Mar.24*,27		1,1	Dundas; U. Ottawa St.	H. Moore; W. F. Smith
Marsh Hawk	Mar.	20*	1	Sulphur Springs	J. H. Williams, North
Gray Partridge	Mar.	27	10	Tapleytown	North, Westmore
Killdeer	Mar.	7F	1	N. shore Dundas Marsh	Dr. E. Dinniwell
American Woodcock	Mar.	29*	1	Ancaster Golf Club	Andrew Westmore
Iceland Gull	Mar.	7	1	Burlington Golf Club	G. North, R. Westmore
Mourning Dove	Mar.	7F	1	Oakville	Robert Curry
Great Horned Owl	Mar.	28	N2E	Burlington	Keith Salisbury
Snowy Owl	Mar.	7,18	1,1	Alberton; W end Bay	Tom Reids; G. North
Yellow-sh. Flicker	Mar.13,31		1,1	Dundas; Woodland Cem.	H. Moore; G. North
Pileated Wdpkr.	Mar.6,6,7		2,1,2	Beverly,Carluke,Ancaster	Westmore; H. Moore
Red-headed Wdpkr.	Mar.13,28		1,3	Cayuga;Bell School Line	T. Reids; Westmore
Red-br. Nuthatch	Mar.	7	1	Ancaster	Huber Moore
Mockingbird	Mar.	6	1	Ewen Road	Carol Anderson
Robin	Mar.	6F	1	Beulah Avenue	Miss Laura Stewart
Eastern Bluebird	Mar.27*28		1,2	Dundas Marsh	J. Miles; R. Westmore
Loggerhead Shrike	Mar.21*28		2,2	Campbellville; Burlington	John Eddy; Westmore
E. Meadowlark	Mar.	28F	2	Hamilton Cemetery	William F. Smith
Red-wing.Blackbird	Mar.	6F	2,20	Brock Rd.; Dundas	G. North; J. Miles
Common Grackle	Mar.	7,F9	1,1	Burlington; Duff's Cors.	Westmore; R. Curry
Brown-h. Cowbird	Mar.	28F	2	Rattlesnake Point	R. Westmore, G. North
Evening Grosbeak	Mar.	7	1	Ancaster	Huber Moore
Purple Finch	Mar.	13	20	Brantford	H. Clase, R. Westmore
	Mar.	28	Many at feeders in Dundas, Hamilton, Burlington		
Field Sparrow	Mar.	27*	12	Walker's Line above #5	Wm. F. Smith
White-throated Sp.	Mar.	27	1	Dundas feeder	Mabel Watson
Snow Bunting	Feb.	28	160	Caledonia; Southcote	J. Miles, R. Westmore

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